Claims

1. A decking tool comprising:

a tool body for location on a plurality of laid decking boards;

a detachable spacer member for connection to the tool body, the spacer member having a plurality of spacer elements for location between adjacent decking boards of the laid decking boards, the spacer elements having a predetermined size to space the boards apart from one another by a distance corresponding to said predetermined size, and adjacent spacer elements being spaced from one another by a predetermined distance corresponding to a width of the decking boards; and

a first coupling element on the tool body and a corresponding second coupling element on the spacer member for releasably connecting the spacer member to the tool body to enable spacer members to be interchanged to thereby provide different predetermined sizes and/or different distances depending on the desired spacing between decking boards and the width of the decking boards which are being laid.

2. The tool of claim 1 wherein the tool body includes at least one opening and the spacer member comprises a rod from which the spacing elements extend, the bar being for location on the tool body so the spacer elements can project through the at least one opening.

3. The tool of claim 1 wherein the first coupling element comprises at least one screw threaded stem and a nut for screw-threaded engagement with the stem, and the second coupling element comprises at least one hole through the bar so that the bar can be located on the tool body by engaging the stem with the hole and secured in place by the nut.

4. The tool of claim 3 wherein the first coupling element comprises two said stems and nuts, and the second coupling element comprises two said openings.

5. The tool of claim 4 wherein the said stems are positioned on the tool body and the holes are positioned on the bar so that when the holes engage with the stems, the spacer elements are spaced from an edge of the tool body by a predetermined distance to form a guide for fasteners to secure the decking boards to the joists.

6. The tool of claim 1 wherein the tool body has a front edge and an abutment member spaced from the front edge for abutting the joists to thereby locate the front edge over the decking boards and the joists to form a guide for the location of fasteners to secure the decking boards to the joists when the spacer member is attached to the tool body.

7. The tool of claim 6 wherein the abutment member comprises a leading edge of at least one of the spacer elements.

8. The tool of claim 6 wherein the abutment member comprises a leading edge of a plurality of the spacer elements.

9. The tool of claim 6 wherein the leading edge of all of the spacer elements are in alignment and spaced from the front edge of the tool body by the second predetermined distance so that the leading edge of all of the spacer elements forms the abutment member.

10. The tool of claim 1 wherein the tool body comprises a substantially rectangular body, or U-shaped body in cross-section, having a generally flat lower surface from which the spacer elements project.

11. The tool of claim 1 wherein the tool body has an upper surface to which is connected a handle for facilitating movement and positioning of the decking tool.

12. The tool of claim 1 wherein the tool body has a longitudinal centre line and the handle is offset relative to the centre line so that two like decking tools can be stacked in back to back relationship to reduce the size of a package of two such tools for shipment from one place to another.

13. The tool of claim 1 wherein the spacer elements include end spacer elements which locate adjacent outer surfaces of outermost boards of the plurality of laid boards, the end spacer elements being of greater length in a direction away from the tool body than the remainder of spacer elements.

14. A decking tool comprising:

a tool body for location on a plurality of laid decking boards;

a plurality of spacer elements extending from the body for location between adjacent decking boards of the laid decking boards, the spacer elements having a predetermined size to space the boards apart from one another by a distance corresponding to the said predetermined size, and adjacent spacer elements being spaced from one another by a distance corresponding to the width of the decking boards; and

the spacer elements having side surfaces and at least part of the side surfaces being substantially parallel so that the decking boards can abut the parts of the side surfaces which are substantially parallel to thereby space the boards without the tendency of the boards forcing the tool away from the boards.

15. The tool of claim 14 wherein the parts of the spacer elements which are substantially parallel are adjacent the tool body, the elements having free ends and the side surfaces adjacent the free ends tapering towards one another to facilitate entry of the spacer elements between adjacent decking boards.

16. The tool of claim 14 wherein the tool body has a front edge and an abutment member spaced from the front edge for abutting the joist to thereby locate the front edge over the decking boards and the joist to form a guide for the location of fasteners to secure the decking boards to the joist.

17. The tool of claim 16 wherein the abutment member comprises a leading edge of at least one of the spacer elements.

18. The tool of claim 16 wherein the abutment member comprises a leading edge of a plurality of the spacer elements.

19. The tool of claim 16 wherein the leading edge of all of the spacer elements are in alignment and spaced from the front edge of the tool body by the second predetermined distance so that the leading edge of all of the spacer elements forms the abutment member.

20. The tool of claim 14 wherein the tool body comprises a substantially rectangular body, or U-shaped body in cross-section, having a generally flat lower surface from which the spacer elements project.

21. The tool of claim 14 wherein the tool body has an upper surface to which is connected a handle for facilitating movement and positioning of the decking tool.

22. The tool of claim 21 wherein the tool body has a longitudinal centre line and the handle is offset relative to the centre line so that two like decking tools can be stacked in back to back relationship to reduce the size of a package of two such tools for shipment from one place to another.

23. The tool of claim 14 wherein the spacer elements include end spacer elements which locate adjacent outer surfaces of outermost boards of the plurality of laid boards, the end spacer elements being of greater length in a direction away from the tool body than the remainder of spacer elements.

24. A decking tool comprising:

a tool body for location on a plurality of laid decking boards;

a plurality of spacer elements extending from the body for location between adjacent decking boards of the laid decking boards, the spacer elements having a predetermined size to space the boards apart from one another by a distance corresponding to said predetermined size, and adjacent spacer elements being spaced from one another by a distance corresponding to the width of the decking boards; and

the tool body having a front edge and an abutment member spaced from the front edge for abutting the joist to thereby locate the front edge over the decking boards and the joist to form a guide for the location of fasteners to secure the decking boards to the joist.

25. The tool of claim 24 wherein the abutment member comprises a leading edge of at least one of the spacer elements.

26. The tool of claim 24 wherein the abutment member comprises a leading edge of a plurality of the spacer elements.

27. The tool of claim 24 wherein the leading edge of all of the spacer elements are in alignment and spaced from the front edge of the tool body by the second predetermined distance so that the leading edge of all of the spacer elements forms the abutment member.

28. The tool of claim 24 wherein the tool includes a removal spacer plate which is selectively connected to the tool body so as to form a front edge of the tool body which is spaced from the abutment member by a first distance when the removable plate is attached to the tool body, and the tool body having a front edge which is spaced from the abutment member by a second distance when the removable plate is removed from the tool body.

29. The tool of claim 24 wherein the tool body comprises a substantially rectangular body, or U-shaped body in cross-section, having a generally flat lower surface from which the spacer elements project.

30. The tool of claim 24 wherein the tool body has an upper surface to which is connected a handle for facilitating movement and positioning of the decking tool.

31. The tool of claim 30 wherein the tool body has a longitudinal centre line and the handle is offset relative to the centre line so that two like decking tools can be stacked in back to back relationship to reduce the size of a package of two such tools for shipment from one place to another.

32. The tool of claim 24 wherein the spacer elements comprise plates having a first section adjacent the tool

body which is of a predetermined size to thereby define the space between adjacent decking boards, the plate tapering to a free edge remote from the tool body, and the free edge being curved or flat in shape.

33. The tool of claim 24 wherein the spacer elements have side surfaces and at least part of the side surfaces are substantially parallel so that the decking boards can abut the side surfaces which are substantially parallel to thereby space the boards without the tendency of the boards forcing the tool away from the boards.

34. The tool of claim 24 wherein the spacer elements include end spacer elements which locate adjacent outer surfaces of outermost boards of the plurality of laid boards, the end spacer elements being of greater length in a direction away from the tool body than the remainder of spacer elements.

35. A method of laying a decking comprising the steps of:

laying a plurality of decking boards on joists;

positioning a decking tool defined in any one of claims 1 to 34 so that spacer elements of the decking tool locate between decking boards of the plurality of decking boards, and front edges of the spacer elements abut a joist to thereby space the decking boards apart by the predetermined distance; and

using a front edge of the tool to form a guide to locate fasteners through the decking boards and into the joist to thereby secure the decking boards to the joist.

36. The method of claim 34 wherein the tool is used in the above-mentioned manner to nail the decking boards to a first of the joists, and then the tool is moved to a second of the joists to nail the boards to a second of the joists, and then is moved to a third of the joists to nail

the boards to a third of the joists, and so on until all of the plurality of boards are nailed to the joists.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein a further plurality of boards are then laid, and the tool is used in the same manner to secure those boards to the joists.